

# Addressing Standards and Postal Regulations

DPHHS can get the lowest possible rates for postage if a high percentage of its outgoing mail conforms to U.S. Postal Service addressing standards.

These days, a lot of the mail is sorted by electronic readers. These machines can only decipher block letters that have a well-defined space between them. They get confused by symbols, punctuation, and nonstandard abbreviations. Such mail is spit out for manual sorting, which means higher postage rates!



## The Three Basic Rules for Addresses:

1. No punctuation, period! (Not even periods...)
2. No symbols (this includes '#').
3. Use standard abbreviations, even if the entire word would fit.

## Standard Abbreviations

- **Primary address abbreviations:**

<b>AVE</b>	Avenue	<b>IS</b>	Island
<b>BLVD</b>	Boulevard	<b>JCT</b>	Junction
<b>CT</b>	Court	<b>LN</b>	Lane
<b>CTR</b>	Center	<b>MTN</b>	Mountain
<b>CIR</b>	Circle	<b>RD</b>	Road
<b>DR</b>	Drive	<b>ST</b>	Street
<b>FT</b>	Fort	<b>TRL</b>	Trail
<b>HTS</b>	Heights	<b>VLG</b>	Village
<b>HWY</b>	Highway	<b>XING</b>	Crossing

- **Highway Contract Route, Star Route, Rural Route:**

These usually have a box number associated with them (it's NOT a P.O. box):

<b>RR</b>	Rural Route (example: <b>RR 1 Box 45</b> )
<b>HC</b>	Highway Contract <b>or</b> Star Route (example: <b>HC 6 Box 15</b> )

- **Directionals:**      N, S, E, W      NE, NW, SE, SW

- **Secondary address (unit) abbreviations:**

<b>APT</b>	Apartment	<b>LOT</b>	Lot
<b>BLDG</b>	Building	<b>RM</b>	Room
<b>BSMT</b>	Basement	<b>STE</b>	Suite
<b>FL</b>	Floor	<b>TRLR</b>	Trailer

## Examples of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ address formatting:

*Wrong:*

~~JOHN C SMITH  
#3 WEST OAK STREET, APT. #10  
P.O. BOX 205  
TWODOT, MT 59999~~

*Right:*

JOHN C SMITH  
3 W OAK ST APT 10  
PO BOX 205  
TWODOT MT 59999

Note: In this case, the residence address would not print on the piece of mail, because TEAMS/MACCS defaults to the mailing address if one is entered. However, you should follow postal standards for the entire address on ADDR.

## Other Rules and Tips

- **For numbered streets (like First St):**

Type it as **1st St** (2nd, 3rd, 4th, *etc.*), not ‘First St’ or ‘1 St’.

- **For “half” addresses:**

The Postal Service standard is to type the fraction with a slash. Be sure to include a space between the main number and the fraction so that the numbers don’t run together (for example, **135 1/2 Main St**).

- **For General Delivery addresses:**

This should be spelled out on the address line:

JOHN DOE  
**GENERAL DELIVERY**  
SMALLTOWN MT 59999

- **For “In Care Of”:**

TEAMS/MACCS can’t handle the characters “C/O” because those three characters in sequence (C, slash, O) are a programming command. If used in an address, it can cause the system to abend. Instead, you have to type CO or %.

**Tip:** Be careful not to confuse actual street names with “directionals” or other abbreviations. For example:

In Missoula, there are streets called "North Avenue" and "South Avenue." For the latter, type SOUTH AVE, not S AVE, because "South" is the name of the street.

Another example might be "Trail Street." You would type TRAIL ST, not TRL ST.

**Tip:** For more information about Postal Service regulations, visit them on the Internet at <http://www.usps.gov>

## Ever wondered how those ‘program-specific’ address fields (such as MED CARD ADDRESS) work on ADDR?

The system goes through a series of steps to determine what address to use for mail, starting at the top of the ADDR screen:

1. If only a residence address is entered, all mail is sent to that address.
2. If a mailing address is also entered, mail is sent there instead (the residence address is ignored).
3. If another address is entered farther down the screen for Food Stamps, Medicaid card, QMB card, or AFDC (FAIM) benefits, the system will mail *that item* to the specified address. It will follow Steps 1 and 2 for all other mail.

## If a person is staying at a homeless shelter or other agency, how do you enter the address so that the post office will deliver it in care of that agency?

Each part of the address screen has two lines (two for Residence Address, two for Mailing Address, etc.). The first of those two lines can be used for “in care of” information. Let’s say John Doe lives at the Salvation Army. That agency has a post office box. You still need to enter its physical location in the “residence address” line, but the mailing address is what will print on the mail. So, that is where you’ll put the “in care of” information:

ADDR		ADDRESS			
CASE NAME	: DOE, JOHN	TELEPHONE TYPE:	M		
TELEPHONE	: 4065551234	TELEPHONE TYPE:			
TELEPHONE	:	TELEPHONE TYPE:			
	STREET OR R.R.	CITY	STATE	ZIP	
RESIDENCE	: 105 MAIN ST	ANYTOWN	MT	59999 - 0000	
ADDRESS	:				
MAILING	: % SALVATION ARMY	ANYTOWN	MT	59999 - 0000	
ADDRESS	: PO BOX 9999				
FS BEN	:				
ADDRESS	:				

**The address on the mail would look like this:**



JOHN DOE  
% SALVATION ARMY  
PO BOX 9999  
ANYTOWN MT 59999

## Policy Requirements for Residence Address

You must record the participant’s actual residence address on the system, for home visits, audits, etc. Nobody lives in a post office box, so be sure to enter the physical location of the home. Then, complete the “Mailing Address” line only if the mailing address is different from the residence address.